

Minutes
Louisiana Committee of Certification
September 23, 2014
Bienville Building
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM.

ROLL CALL:

A. Determination of Quorum.

Committee Members in attendance were: Dirk Barrios, Chairman, Dennis McGehee, Vice-Chairman, Mayor Vern Breland, Tom Walton, Greg Shelden, and Jake Causey.

Absent members were: Camille Mize, Tom Owens, and Grant Magnon.

A quorum was achieved.

Recognition of Visitors and Others:

Visitors in attendance: Ray Poplus, Michael Sobert, and Carroll Aucoin.

DHH staff in attendance: David McCay, Laurie Jewell, Steve Hoss, and Jim Mooring.

B. Announcements: There were no announcements.

MINUTES:

The minutes from the August 7, 2014 and September 5, 2014 meetings were distributed and reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Jake Causey and seconded by Tom Walton. The motion passed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Mr. Barrios had no report.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Dr. Mooring stated that Valenscia Walker was in her second week working with the Program and that she is doing a fine job. He noted that Mr. Aucoin was present regarding his HS situation to be discussed as Old Business and his points to be considered as New Business.

TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT:

The Committee reviewed exam statistics presented by Mr. Hoss. The stats from all 2014 exams to that date were provided along with exam totals from 2009 to that date.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Mr. Causey informed the Committee that the final budget report for FY14 was in and the Operator Certification Program was \$50,000 over budget. He understands that the Committee and other stakeholders support a fee increase. He continues to advocate for fee increases. He is not sure if any proposals will be forthcoming in the next legislative session. The proposed exam and certificate fees are \$40. He explained that there are many thresholds which must be passed to have legislation introduced. A fee increase has not been able to pass these thresholds as of yet. Mayor Breland asked if there is a legislator willing to

sponsor such a bill. Mr. Causey is not aware of any legislator who has been approached to sponsor such legislation and that, should a member of the Committee want to approach a legislator regarding such a proposal, the agency would work with that legislator. Mr. Walton asked if the Program would be willing to share the information we have regarding a fee proposal. Mr. Causey said the Program will provide that requested information.

ASSOCIATION REPORTS:

Louisiana Conference: Mr. Tom Walton reported that the Conference is working on the 2015 Short Course in Alexandria in conjunction with LWEA and that the agenda is almost 100% complete.

LELAA: Steve Hoss reported that one person has applied to take the lab exam.

LETA: No report.

LRWA: No report

OLD BUSINESS

Minimum Education Requirement-

Dr. Mooring distributed the position statement which the Committee had considered previously. Mr. Causey stated his understanding that any operator who was certified prior to the 2002 rule change, who may not have an approved HS diploma or GED, may not be issued any further certifications without meeting this standard. Also, BESE approves both public and non-public schools. Also, SACS accredits both public and non-public schools. Also, charter schools must be State approved or accredited by a third party such as SACS to receive State funding. Also, it makes sense to him for us to accept diplomas from schools which are State approved or accredited by SACS since the State requires this for funding. Also, we are not education specialists; we don't approve or accredit schools; so we should defer to the Department of Education as to which programs meet the standard of high school education.

Mr. Ray Poplus from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, K through 12 accreditation program, addressed the Committee. He stated that Advance-Ed is an international accrediting agency which encompasses SACS. Schools must meet a set of rigorous standards to be Advance-Ed accredited. He provided a copy of the standards. He also stated that the State's scholarship (voucher) program will provide funds for eligible students to attend schools approved by BESE and accredited by a third party agency with SACS (Advanc-Ed) mentioned by name.

Mr. Causey voiced his opinion that merely having a certified teacher attest to the equivalency of a HS curriculum is not acceptable.

The focus then shifted to admission into a college or university as proof of HS graduation. Mr. Poplus advised the Committee that the State does have certain expectations concerning the number and type of courses required to receive a HS diploma; and that the admissions departments of SACS accredited colleges and universities will determine that those have been met.

Mr. Causey made the motion to accept, as policy concerning applicants without a GED, the following:

1. High school diploma from a secondary educational institution/program approved at the time of graduation by BESE, LDE, or the equivalent thereof in another

- applicable state; with language including SACS/Advance-ED accreditation or equivalent regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of the US Department of Education added or
2. Proof of their admission into a Louisiana public university or college, a public university or college in another state, or any other university or college accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (“SACS”) or equivalent regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; which offer an Associates or Bachelors Degree added and

Nothing in this *Statement of Position* shall allow or be construed to allow the high school diploma requirement of §7309 to be satisfied by a degree, diploma, or certificate from a “diploma mill”, defined in the federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (P.L. 110-315), Title I, Section 103 as:

an entity that--

- (A)(i) offers, for a fee, degrees, diplomas, or certificates, that may be used to represent to the general public that the individual possessing such a degree, diploma, or certificate has completed a program of postsecondary education or training; and
- (ii) requires such individual to complete little or no education or coursework to obtain such degree, diploma, or certificate; and
- (B) lacks accreditation by an accrediting agency or association that is recognized as an accrediting agency or association of institutions of higher education (as such term is defined in section 102) by--
 - (i) the Secretary pursuant to subpart 2 of part H of title IV; or
 - (ii) a Federal agency, State government, or other organization or association that recognizes accrediting agencies or associations.

The motion, which was seconded by Mayor Breland, carried. Mr. McCay was asked to draft a statement of policy reflecting this motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Carroll Aucoin asked the Committee to reconsider his qualifying points. He is currently limited because he has not met the education points requirement for Class 3. Mr. Barrios noted that the rule is clear concerning the need for both education and experience points for Class 3 and 4 certifications. Mr. Walton stated that he had spoken with Mr. Aucoin about his Master Plumbers license and that he had contacted the Plumbing Board. That Board requires 8,000 hours of training to be eligible for license. He believes this should be issued partial education credit for this. Mr. Causey stated the 8,000 hours is experience as an apprentice. Mr. Walton asked what are the education requirements to renew a plumbing license? Mr. Aucoin stated that he needs 6 hours of continuing education per year to renew

and that he has a letter stating for how long he has maintained his license, uninterrupted. The Committee asked Dr. Mooring to verify that and assign points based upon that verification. Dr. Mooring then asked if he is to assume that since an operator has been licensed for a given amount of time that the operator has received the minimum number of continuing education hours that would represent. The Committee advised Staff not to assume that.

Mr. Causey introduced Laurie Jewell, attorney, to the Committee.

Mr. Walton asked that since all advanced exams are now 100 questions can we allow examinees to use their 32 hour class as entrance into 2 exam dates in order to take all 3 Class 3 or 4 Water exams. The Staff informed the Committee that such policy has already been implemented.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next scheduled meeting will be held on October 31, 2014 in Baton Rouge at the Bienville Building.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn by Mr. Causey was seconded by Mr. Walton and was approved.